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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN (J. MUDGE), DRL/PHD (C. KUCHTA-
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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN OFFERS LEGAL STATUS FOR LABOR MIGRANTS
FROM CIS STATES

¶1. Summary: August 1 was the effective date of a new amnesty law allowing illegal laborers from CIS countries to obtain legal status in Kazakhstan. In order to qualify, employers of illegal laborers must submit application documents to the city migration police before December 31. Migrants will then receive a special migrant card allowing them to work legally in Kazakhstan for three years. Employers receive an exemption from liability for hiring the illegal laborers. The law applies only to those migrants who entered Kazakhstan prior to May 31. The Ministry of Interior expects to register about 100,000 laborers under the new law. End summary.

New Amnesty Law Takes Effect

¶2. On July 4, President Nazarbayev signed an amnesty law offering legal status for illegal laborers from CIS countries. Although the text of the law has not yet been published, multiple media sources have reported on the issue. Effective August 1, employers of illegal migrants may submit an application for amnesty with the city migration police. Employers must also submit copies of identification documents and a labor contract for their illegal migrant workers.

¶3. After review by the migration police, qualified migrants will receive a special migrant card which permits them to work in Kazakhstan for three years. The card also allows migrants to change employers and enter and exit the country legally. Employers receive an exemption from administrative and criminal liability for hiring the illegal laborers.

Amnesty Offer Is Limited

¶4. The amnesty offer expires on December 31, and does not extend to migrants who entered Kazakhstan after May 31, migrants from non-CIS countries, or migrants who violated other laws or engaged in activities that require a license.

Authorities Expect to Legalize 100,000 Workers

¶5. The head of the Ministry of Interior migration police directorate Serik Sainov, quoted in media reports, said that over a thousand migrants were legalized in the first few days of the new law. He estimates that there are 200,000 to 300,000 illegal laborers from the CIS in Kazakhstan, and that approximately 100,000 of them will obtain legal status under the new amnesty law. Based on this estimate, authorities said they expect to receive approximately 8 billion KZM in additional tax revenue from workers legalized under the new law.

¶6. Comment: Although the new law provides some stability and certainty for a portion of the illegal workers in Kazakhstan, it is a temporary patch, and does not address the underlying structural problems that attract a growing illegal workforce. End comment.

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